

the Senate to act promptly on his nomination.

Statement on Medicare and the Patients' Bill of Rights

June 23, 1998

I am pleased to add my voice in support of today's efforts by Representatives Ganske and Dingell to file a discharge petition enabling an up or down vote in the House of Representatives for a Patients' Bill of Rights. Since November of last year, I have been calling on Congress to pass such legislation.

It is now 7 months later and Congress has been unable to pass legislation, let alone hold even one Committee mark-up on a bill. With so many Americans' health at stake, I welcome the action taken today by Representatives Ganske and Dingell, and I believe it will help ensure an open debate on this issue that will allow for all parties, including Representative Norwood, to bring patients' rights legislation to the floor for vote.

Passing patients' rights legislation would build on the actions I have already taken to extend patient protections to Americans in Federal health plans. This Friday, we will publish a Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) regulation to implement new rules for all Medicare managed-care plans. The HCFA regulation will implement the new Medicare plan choices I signed into law last year as a part of the bipartisan balanced budget agreement. It will also include many of the patient protections I directed Medicare to implement last February, when I signed an Executive memorandum ordering all Federal health plans—which serve 85 million Americans—to come into compliance with the Patients' Bill of Rights. These regulations ensure that Medicare beneficiaries in managed-care plans have a range of important patient protections, including access to the specialists they need, access to ob-gyns, access to emergency room services, and an independent appeals process to address grievances with their health plans.

Now we need the Congress to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights that guarantees all Americans these important patient protections. It is my hope and expectation that the

bipartisan action being taken today in Congress will spur the House and the Senate to pass a strong, enforceable, and long-overdue bill.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Legislation

June 23, 1998

I am deeply disappointed in the action taken within the House Appropriations Committee today. Returning to the partisanship of the past, House Republicans backed a bill that would take us backwards just when we should be addressing the challenges of the next century.

Last year we made critical investments in every stage of our children's lives in a bipartisan balanced budget. From Head Start expansion to new tax credits that make college more affordable, we worked together to make smart investments in our people and our future. To build on that success, this year I proposed commonsense investments to reduce class size, modernize America's schools, and make quality child care more affordable.

Working together, we can continue to move the Nation forward. But the House Republican bill takes us in the wrong direction, short-changing critical investments in our young people—from preschool and child care to antidrug and safe after-school programs. These cuts are arbitrary, and some are extreme. This bill would completely eliminate the summer jobs program, denying more than one-half million teenagers valuable work experience. It would slow progress on our efforts to improve children's literacy and computer skills. And for poor families, the Republicans would eliminate the program that they rely on to help them heat their homes during the winter. This bill is out of step with our values and the wrong vision for America's future.

**Statement on Congressional Action
on Internal Revenue Service Reform
Legislation**

June 23, 1998

For months now, I have urged Congress to do more to help the American taxpayer. Today I am pleased that the House and Senate have finally reached a bipartisan agreement to reform the IRS and strengthen taxpayer rights. We need an IRS that reflects American values and respects American taxpayers. This bill goes a long way toward that goal, and I look forward to signing it into law.

**Statement on Returning Without
Approval to the House of
Representatives the "Iran Missile
Proliferation Sanctions Act of 1998"**

June 23, 1998

I have committed my administration to an unceasing effort to halt the transfer of missile technology to nations that conduct or condone terrorism and otherwise violate international norms. The stated purpose of H.R. 2709—the "Iran Missile Proliferation Act of 1998"—is to further this effort. To the contrary, if enacted, it would damage the U.S. national interest, making it harder to achieve the goals it is intended to serve. Therefore, I am vetoing this bill.

The battle against proliferation is most effective as a cooperative enterprise. It will be successful if other, like-minded governments join in enacting and enforcing the strictest possible export-control policies. As my veto message makes clear, this bill mandates the sweeping application of sanctions according to inflexible and indiscriminate criteria. It would require the imposition of sanctions based on an unworkably low standard of evidence. Sanctions could be wrongly triggered against individuals and businesses worldwide, including against companies that did not know the true end user of their products. The sanctions are also disproportionate. A minor violation would carry the same penalty as a major one. As a result, the bill would generate tensions and discourage coopera-

tion with the very nations whose support we must enlist.

From my conversations with Members of Congress, I sense a growing awareness that the vast machinery of U.S. sanctions law has not served our interests well and is in serious need of an overhaul. Adding yet another flawed sanctions bill is not the way to start, especially since this one is redundant. Existing law provides a sufficient basis for imposing sanctions when we need them.

I am particularly concerned about the impact that the bill would have on our on-going effort to work with the Russian Government to stem the flow of technology from that country to Iran's missile program. This is a very real problem, to which this administration has accorded the highest priority over the past year and a half. As a result of my own work with President Yeltsin, reinforced by the efforts of the Vice President, the Secretary of State, and other officials, the Russian Government recently has adopted new legal and administrative measures to deal with this problem. While the hard work of implementation must continue, we have seen concrete progress, which we seek to encourage, not undercut.

This bill will make it more difficult to continue our work with the Russian Government in this area. Moreover, the imposition of unilateral American sanctions could damage our interests in working with the Russian Government in other vital areas, such as arms control, law enforcement, counternarcotics and combating transnational crime. This bill would hinder, not help, our overall national interests.

**Message to the House of
Representatives Returning Without
Approval the "Iran Missile
Proliferation Sanctions Act of 1998"**

June 23, 1998

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 2709, the "Iran Missile Proliferation Sanctions Act of 1998."